

SCIENCE AND PRACTICE OF AGRICULTURE.

In this number will be seen a very sensible letter from the pen of Liebeg, which deserves a careful reading; and we trust that the Canadian husbandmen will not only read, but make it a point to investigate, understand, and practise the noble sentiments it contains. It is frequently asserted by farmers, that their soil is not adapted for certain crops, and at the same time they may unknowingly be in possession of the very substance, at the bottom of some marsh, or in the sub-soil within reach of the plough, and this want of knowledge not unfrequently entails the most ruinous consequences. No man deserves the esteem of the agriculturist more than Liebeg; as it is to his researches, and writings that the business of agriculture has been made a science. When the principles of vegetation becomes once well understood by the agriculturist, he may then with confidence engage in perfecting the improvements pointed out by the man of science; but when the whole matter appears wrapt up in mystery, and even the working of the most simple laws of nature, are attributed to chance or improper causes, it is useless, under such circumstances, to expect that persons thus blind and ignorant will engage with any considerable spirit, in the important work of effecting an agricultural reform.

It always was, and we suppose always will be the case, that a much greater amount of manual labor is expended in the production of the common necessities of life than would be required if the operators understood the causes and effects of their various operations. Science has very liberally lent her aid to art in the numerous manufacturing branches of the day, and at last she has lent her power-

ful arm to agriculture, in a manner which does great credit to so useful and noble a profession. Any farmer who has thoroughly made himself acquainted with the science as well as the practice of agriculture, will no longer feel that he is engaged in a menial occupation, but that the cultivation of the soil is the most independent, ennobling, and instructive professions that a man of refined sensibility could possibly engage in. Plants, like living animals, require food to bring them to a state of perfection, and what would be adapted to one class, might prove fatal if applied to others. The science of agriculture very beautifully points out the kinds of food adapted to each; and the farmer who makes himself master of this science, is not only a wiser and better cultivator, but may fairly hope to obtain larger returns and greater profits, than the man who attributes the success and failures of his experiments to the operations of blind chance. A thoroughly clever farmer may manage his soil so, that with one half of the labor usually expended in preparing the ground for a crop, he may obtain fully double the return that would be harvested from the land expensively cultivated. But few would believe this doctrine, but nevertheless it is a fact which has been proved to a clear demonstration in the preparation of the soil for the winter wheat crop in the British Isles. The limits for this article will not admit of a detail of facts to prove the above assertion, but from what we know of scientific agriculture, we would suppose it as rational to calculate that the old fashioned mode of spinning and weaving cotton could be made to compete with the modern improved methods, as readily as the old fashioned systems of husbandry could compete with those which the men of science have practiced.

The welfare of this highly favored colony in a great measure depends upon the amount of interest which the Canadian farmers evince in the acquisition of a knowledge of the science of agriculture.